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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. EDWARDS of Maryland).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 2, 2009.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DONNA F. EDWARDS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2009, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 30 minutes and each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, limited to 5 minutes.

AMERICA IS FACING A CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, America is facing a crisis. The budget request projects a \$1.8 trillion deficit this year and a \$533 billion deficit in fiscal year 2013, and red ink is as far as the eye can see.

We have over \$56 trillion in unfunded obligations for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. The national debt is nearing \$11 trillion and growing every day.

Standard & Poor's investment service predicts the loss of America's AAA

bond rating as early as 2012, and that will be devastating.

Every day seems to bring more bad news. The stock market continues to plummet, dropping below 7,000 this morning, and Americans everywhere understand that our Nation is in trouble. When I left my office today, the stock market was down over 200 points.

Most Americans realize that Congress is broken, and it will take a special process to address this runaway spending.

The action that will lead to a solution is the bipartisan commission that Congressman COOPER of Tennessee and I have proposed, with every spending program on the table along with tax policy. Congress, under this process, would be forced to vote on the commission's recommendations, and over 111 Members of the House pledged their support to this last year, and it would be bipartisan.

This process, which also would have outside experts, would help establish confidence. In the Webster Dictionary it says in the definition of confidence, "the faith or belief that one will act in a right, or effective, way." And boy, do we need that now.

Congress is paralyzed by partisan bickering, and so far, this Congress has chosen to hide behind the mantra of "regular order." But this problem will not fix itself.

There is a bridge linking Trenton, New Jersey, with Morrisville, Pennsylvania, and there's a sign on the bridge that said, "Trenton Makes, the World Takes." Well, Trenton doesn't make anything anymore, and the sign ought to say, "The World Makes, Trenton Takes." And all you have to do is get on the train from Washington going up to New York, and all the factories are closed and in decay, and the windows are broken.

A bipartisan commission would renew America's confidence in the economy. It would create a renaissance

in the ability of our elected leaders to act. It would provide a bigger and brighter future for the next generation of America's young people and ensure that we have discretionary dollars for math and science and physics and chemistry and biology and cancer research, research for autism, research for Alzheimer's. It would also help create manufacturing.

For the sake of this country, this Congress and this administration should act to set up a bipartisan panel to help us give some hope to our children and our grandchildren.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would also say to the leaders of this Congress, this is also a moral issue. This is also a moral issue. Is it appropriate for one generation to be living so well, knowing that their children and grandchildren will have to pay?

And to close, I read a quote by Deitrich Bonhoeffer, who was a Lutheran pastor who stood up to the Nazis and was killed, hung, by the Nazis in Flossenbergs Prison just before the end of the war. Deitrich Bonhoeffer said, "The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children."

This Congress, as of now, is failing that moral test.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m. today.

Accordingly (at 12 o'clock and 35 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. HIRONO) at 2 p.m.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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